

THE SPIRITUAL ISSUES OF THE WAR

OBJECTS:

1. To provide for readers at home and abroad information concerning the life and thought of the British Churches in wartime.
2. To elucidate by news and quotations the spiritual issues at stake in the war.

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NORWAY: IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

Some weeks ago (*Spiritual Issues*, No. 172) the resignation of a Quisling clergyman was reported from Oslo. More details of this occurrence are now available. The clergyman's name was Hansteen, and on Sunday, February 14th, he entered the pulpit of the parish church of Uranienborg, and made the following announcement: "I am now convinced that it is a sin and an injustice against a parish to force it to accept a priest whom it does not want. I had my part in this injustice, when I allowed myself to be nominated as vicar of this parish. I have asked pardon of God for the sin that I have committed, and to-day I ask pardon from the priests and faithful of this parish, from which I am now resigning. The conviction, which I have now reached, forces me to revise my religious point of view. The result has been the sending to the Department of my resignation as vicar of the parish of Uranienborg. But in the future I wish to continue to work as a priest without being an official, and I will hold to the Holy Scriptures and the doctrine and rites of the Norwegian Church. I consider my old bishops as the lawful heads of the Church and the members of the Temporary Church Leadership as my superiors. In full liberty and convinced of the truth of the confession of faith 'The Ground of the Church,' dated Holy Saturday, 1942, I here make my profession of allegiance to it." ("The Ground of the Church" was the document expressing the faith of the Norwegian Church read in the churches on Easter Day, 1942 (see *Spiritual Issues*, No. 132).

On March 3rd the paper *Stockholms Tidningen* reported that the Quisling authorities had now dismissed Pastor Tybring

of Oslo because he explained to Dean Hansteen that he should not take orders from the Quisling authorities, and thanked him when he publicly broke with the N.S.

Pagan Teaching in Norway

New attempts are being made to introduce anti-Christian teaching into the schools. Thus *Svenska Dagbladet* (Sweden) writes that it is intended to compel the Norwegian elementary school teachers to give instruction in race theory, and to provide positive information about the ideology of the new era, emphasizing among other things the detrimental influence of the Jews on Nordic culture.

Nya Dagligt Allehanda (another Swedish paper) exposes similar tendencies. It writes, "The new paganism is making progress in Quisling's Norway. The N.S. clergymen have for long eagerly preached 'Nordic Christianity,' and Pastor Hage, in Elverum, among others, recently expressed this attitude in a demonstrative way by putting up a large wooden "suncross" over the carriage entrance of Elverum church. A Quisling suncross, roofed-in like wayside shrines of Central Europe, has caused great indignation among the population.

"The so-called Hird broadcasts from Oslo emphasise more than ever the importance of the old Northern religion. A Hird speaker recently concluded his lecture by maintaining that the Nordic religion made Nordic men and women strong and hardy, stronger than any other men in the world. Nordic men were born rulers, belonging to the strongest race in the world. 'By virtue of our blood, our race and our traditions, we shall decide our future in the world.'"

WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF
BRITISH INFORMATION SERVICE
66 ROCKEFELLER PLACE
NEW YORK, N. Y.

New Plans to get rid of Church Resistance

This same paper published on March 15th a report from Oslo of great interest, as showing a new line of attack by the Quislings on the faithful clergy of the Church of Norway. The paper writes:

"The Norwegian Church conflict will probably become intensified again, as the highest authorities seem unwilling to make any concessions to the opposition. They prefer to try to quench the opposition by mobilising 'undesirable' clergymen and theological candidates in connection with the national labour mobilisation.

"Minister Skancke sent a letter to Guldberg, the newly appointed Director of the Labour Exchange, saying: 'By request of the Minister President we ask for the help of the Labour Exchange Directorate in mobilising some of the dismissed and striking clergymen, also some theological students, according to the law concerning the national labour mobilisation. It is of the greatest importance for the leadership of the Church that the clique of priests and theologians who have engaged themselves to use religion and the Church against the N.S. should be called up as soon as possible.'

"Two lists comprising the names of 75 priests and about 200 theologians were attached to the letter. The first list included the theological students and ordained clergymen who did not reply to the Church Department's offer of work for the State Church, or replied that they had joined the clergymen who were resigning. The second list comprises clergymen dismissed for a disloyal attitude towards Church and State authorities, also some younger priests who resigned, refusing to accept their salary and to perform some of their duties. Norwegian church circles say that 'the clique of theologians and priests' which Skancke mentions consists of 798 clergymen and practically all the theological students, whereas only 62 clergymen remain outside 'the clique.'

"Norwegian clergymen also ask themselves how the mobilisation of clergymen for forest and agricultural work, or whatever it may be, can harmonise with the watchword of the total labour mobilisation—'Every man in his right place.' It is emphasised that the labour mobilisation must be interpreted as the new weapon to crush opposition.

"The lists include Pastor Lorents de Ferry Smith of Vang in Hedemarken, another clergyman over 60, and several over 50 including Dean Fjellbu (formerly of Trondheim Cathedral.—Ed.). . . . The dioceses of West

Ager and West Telemark have been hit the most severely and hardly a single clergyman will be left in these districts."

Swedish Comment

Dagens Nyheter of March 16th, referring to this transfer of clergymen to forced labour camps far from their homes, states that the measure recalls the shocking transport to North Norway of hundreds of teachers a year ago. The failure of this deportation does not seem to have prevented a similar attempt to break the opposition of the clergymen. The suffering hitherto inflicted on patriotic Norwegians has succeeded only in increasing the strength of their resistance. There is no reason to believe that the recent measure will have different results. The article concludes: "The only effect which Quisling can produce is to add further fuel to the disgust which all responsible people must feel for his thoughtless régime of force against his own countrymen with the help of foreign bayonets."

Types of Quisling Clergy

Svenska Dagbladet gives two instances of the type of man whom the Quisling authorities are trying to introduce into the Church as their supporters. First Karl Flatland, a former farmer and missionary in the Sudan, has now been appointed vicar in Quisling's home town, Fyresdal, in Telemark. Flatland has been in a lunatic asylum and has also been sentenced for several thefts and for taxation frauds. The former priest at Fyresdal, Otto Irgens, was dismissed and expelled some months ago by Quisling himself. Flatland has now taken over Irgens' property, furniture, bed-clothes, and has even been seen in Irgens' personal clothes. The second report is of the appointment of Skadal as the new vicar of Fana, near Bergen, although, it adds, medical examinations have proved that he is insane.

Denmark Greets Norway

Information from Sweden states that Bishop Fulgesang-Damgaard of Copenhagen, in sending greetings to the other Scandinavian Churches, addressed the Norwegian one to Professor Hallesby, head of the Temporary Church Leadership. He greeted "the fighting Church of brother Norwegians" and assured him that Danish Christians were full of admiration for their Norwegian brothers and followed their struggle with the greatest interest. The letter ended with a text from St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (I: 29): "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake."

CHURCH WORK AMONG WOMEN IN THE FORCES

More salaried women lay church workers are to be appointed as assistants to chaplains in A.T.S. camps and training centres. The first twelve women were appointed as an experiment nearly a year ago to meet the increased demands of the largely expanded A.T.S., and their work has proved so successful that their number is now to be doubled. Their function is to promote the spiritual welfare of members of the Service, and they will work in close co-operation with the chaplains.

Experience has shown that many A.T.S. girls welcome the opportunity of a friendly discussion with a woman who has both the time and the qualifications to give advice on personal problems.

The lay church workers live near but not in the camps to which they are attached. They wear a purple badge and armlet with a gold cross and the letters C.W.W.F.—Churches' Work for Women in the Forces. Each worker has a small office where she is readily accessible to all members of the A.T.S. at hours when they are free to visit her.

The duties of these chaplains' assistants include conducting devotional meetings with hymns, prayers and a short address, lecturing on religious subjects, leading study and discussion groups and giving religious instruction on request. They also keep in touch with local churches to advise clergy and laity who may be anxious to offer hospitality or special religious facilities to members of the A.T.S. stationed in the neighbourhood. Service-women are visited by them in hospital and auxiliaries posted to another camp are given letters of introduction to the chaplain or lay church worker there.

Another important part of their work is assisting new recruits to adjust themselves to Service conditions, and helping those who have taken an active part in the life of their local church to continue their religious activities in the Service.

The newly appointed lay church workers, like those originally chosen, include members of the Church of England, the Church of Scotland and the Free Churches. They are ready to help all women who wish to consult them, irrespective of creed.

Candidates are nominated by the Churches' Committee and are approved by the Chaplain General and the A.T.S. Directorate. They are chosen for their previous experience as organisers of church activities, workers for Y.W.C.A. or similar organisations, or as

leaders of church welfare movements among women and girls.

H.M. the Queen paid a visit to Fulham Palace last week to meet representatives of the two groups of women lay church workers who are now acting respectively as Chaplains' Assistants for spiritual work among the A.T.S. and as District Organisers doing similar work among the women of all three Services. Mrs. Geoffrey Fisher, wife of the Bishop of London and Chairman of the C.W.W.F. Committee, presented the workers to Her Majesty, who remained for two hours chatting with them and showing great interest in their work and experiences.

BRITISH CONGREGATIONALISTS WELCOME AMERICAN STATEMENT ON "A JUST AND DURABLE PEACE"

The statement on "a just and durable peace" issued by the American Federal Council of Churches (in last week's *Spiritual Issues*) has produced an immediate and cordial response from the Congregational Union of England and Wales, in the form of a message from the Union to the Federal Council in America. By the courtesy of Dr. Sidney Berry, we are able to publish this message.

"The Council of the Congregational Union of England and Wales is the first of the great religious communions in this country to meet since the publication in the Press of the findings of your Committee appointed two years ago to study the bases of a just and durable peace. We learn that you have issued the report and sent it to the ministers and churches comprised in the fellowship of the Federal Council."

It is with profound gratitude that we have read the Committee's report, and we would like to add our tribute to your Committee for the work they have done and the conclusions which they have reached. We recall with great pleasure the visit recently paid to our country by Mr. Dulles, the Chairman of your Committee, which added a valued link to the already close association between the churches of our two countries.

The churches of the Congregational order in our country will give careful consideration to the conclusions which your Committee has reached, but even on a first reading it is a matter of deep thanksgiving to us all to realise that the six main principles laid down in the report of your Committee follow very closely the conclusions to which we ourselves have been led. It means that an opportunity and a solemn responsibility are given to the churches in our two countries to co-

operate in using all the influences they possess in making these fundamental principles effective in the post-war world. It is our hope and prayer that there may arise in all the nations of the world a great community of Christian conviction which may be used of God in laying the foundations of an order of international life which accords with His Will for all mankind. It is because we believe that the report of your Committee has made a notable contribution to that end that we have received the news of it with such deep thanksgiving.

We realise, as you must do, that the statement of the principles on which a just and durable peace must be founded is only a beginning, and that the application of those principles to the situation which will exist when the war is over will be a task calling for accurate knowledge, careful discernment, sympathy and endless patience. Above all, it will call for a complete consecration of Christian people everywhere to the Will and Purpose of God as it is made known to us.

In this high and difficult enterprise, so nearly related to the well-being of humanity in the future, we assure you of our full co-operation, and we pray that the blessing of God may follow the work of your Committee and may rest richly upon all the churches in your great fellowship.—(Signed) On behalf of the Council of the Congregational Union of England and Wales,

SIDNEY M. BERRY,

March 25th, 1943.

Secretary.

CHRISTIAN FRANCE AND THE FUTURE

An important meeting with the subject Christian France and the Future was held in London on Wednesday, March 24th. The Archbishop of Canterbury was to have presided, but was unavoidably prevented from attending. He sent, however, an important message. In the course of this he said that the traditions of Britain and France, though very different, could mutually supplement each other. "In fact," he said, "the inspiration of both English and French culture has been deeply Christian. Neither of our two countries, of course, has ever perfectly corresponded to a Christian ideal, but the standards by which we have been ready to be

judged have been Christian standards, and that really matters more for mutual understanding than conformity to the standards thus accepted. It is true that one result of the French Revolution was to make a division in the mind of France between its religious inheritance and its democratic aspirations; but for many years now it has seemed that that is in process of being healed, and we may at least hope that when France emerges again triumphant and vigorous from the depths into which she has been cast by the German aggressor, it will be found that the rift is on the way to being closed up. But I am sure that it is by insistence upon this community of spiritual inheritance in the Christian faith that we shall most promote mutual understanding, and certainly for us who are Christians the vision of the future for a regenerated France is a vision of a nation re-born in its own traditional faith and carrying the influence of that faith into every activity of mind and spirit."

Addresses were given by M. F. L. Closon, Secretary for the Interior, Fighting French Headquarters, and one of the editors of the *Sword of the Spirit* paper, *Volontaire*. He spoke of the strong opposition to the Vichy regime among French Roman Catholics. This was especially prominent among the lower clergy as well as being shared by some of the Bishops. "Christian France," he said, "will have to give to the revolution which is already taking place in France its spiritual and moral basis, to ensure that the economic and social changes which will result from it will be inspired by the Christian respect for human liberty and individuality."

Monsieur André Philip, Commissioner for the Interior and formerly Professor in the University of Lyons and a prominent French Protestant, said that the Hand of God could be seen at work in all the resistance movements in France. Many had resisted at a time when there was no human hope, purely because they believed in certain universal principles which they could not surrender even if they had to die for them. He said that France would stand by these principles in the future. They were universal in their scope, but it would be for the French to give a particularly French expression to them. This would be their contribution to the welfare of the whole human community.